

Big Bell companies are blocking access to their networks and stopping competition before it can even begin for local, long-distance, the Internet, cell phone services, and new technologies like making calls over the Internet. If these mergers go through, only two companies will control 90 percent of the consumer market. These mergers would put the interests of large corporations over the interests of individual consumers, and you have a duty to block them. In a world of increased competition, consumers could be enjoying unlimited local and long-distance telephone calls, as well as high-speed Internet access, for just \$40 -- \$15 for community Internet and \$25 for unlimited phone calls over the Internet. But today, this costs about \$90 more than double the price! The FCC should block these mergers and find new ways to bring down the costs of services, particularly high-speed Internet which has become essential to modern life. America is falling behind the rest ! of the world in broadband deployment especially in rural areas like Vermont. We are now 16th, behind countries like Japan and Korea, which have opened up the building blocks of broadband phone and cable lines to competitors. This merger would make the problem worse, not better.